

# Eulogy

Delivered By

Col. John W. Springer, of Denver

At the Bier of



Colonel William Frederick Cody

"Buffalo Bill"

In the Home of Denver Lodge, No. 17, B. P. O. Elks

Sunday, January 14, 1917

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**COL. JOHN W. SPRINGER**

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"On the other side of Jordan  
In the sweet fields of Eden  
Where the Tree of Life is blooming  
There is rest for you."

With his upturned face to the noonday sun, William Frederick Cody, on January 10th, 1917, met the death angel face to face, and drifted out into a dreamless sleep—that knows no waking. It was the peaceful ending of the most picturesque life in American history. As his friend I lay my humble tribute this Sabbath afternoon in the lodge room of the Elks' Home of Denver, Colorado, upon the bier of him whose achievements are the household knowledge of the entire world.

Surrounding me today are distinguished representatives of the U. S. Army, Gen. Baldwin, Gen. Randall, Col. Pope, Col. Monahan, together with representatives of the Grand Army of the Republic, the Woman's Relief Corps, G. A. R. and Ladies of the G. A. R.

The great state of Colorado is represented in Governor Gunter, state officials and committees of the House and Senate, together with Mayor Speer and all Denver city officials.

Wyoming is generously represented by Governor Houx, U. S. Senator Kendrick, Senator Warren and by state officials and committees from House and Senate.

Nebraska is represented by a representative delegation and by the Eminent Commander of the Knights Templar.

Kansas mourns also with us, while the great Elk organization is all about us from Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, Kansas and New Mexico.

Then there are the Colorado Pioneers and the National Order of Cow Boy Rangers, while the Indian tribes remaining have come from their far away hunting grounds to lay away their beloved Pahaska, as Col. Cody was lovingly called by the Indians.

His life typified Dr. Johnson's truism, "That it is better to live rich than to die rich." His friends were legion, from presidents to kings, czars and royalty, to the millions of the common people. His life was for the latter class, and this man with the courage of a lion, had the heart of a child and the sweetness of a woman.

His early life was chaotic; born in the wilds of Iowa in 1845, later taken to Leavenworth, Kansas, where his father was killed in 1857. At the age of twelve years he was left fatherless and forced to aid in caring for a whole family. His first employment was a plains courier, and he made good; his tender years being no bar to his filling the place as a "look-out" for trouble. I knew well his employer, Col. Majors of the old trail freighters. Cody grew with his calling and answered bravely to the Call of

the Wild. The great West fired his young spirit and he grew rapidly and advanced to guide and stage driver in those early days when no pussy-footers were known west of the Mississippi river. It took men of iron nerve to ford rivers, traverse the plains and bring up, after untold hardships, under the shadow of the Rockies.

He was an international educator of men, whose tutors were Generals Sheridan, Carr, Merritt, Cook, Terry, Miles, Col. Royal, and a brilliant galaxy of America's chief fighters. Every school boy has read this wonderful series of tales and millions have personally seen this superb figure as he traveled the states, and all Europe, typifying the real American Pioneer and bringing home to the effete East the strength of the heroes of the plains. He lived and loved Arthur Chapman's poem:—

Out where the handclasp's a little stronger,  
Out where the smile dwells a little longer,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where the sun is a little brighter,  
Where the snows that fall are a trifle whiter,  
Where the bonds of home are a wee bit tighter,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where the skies are a trifle bluer,  
Out where friendship's a little truer,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where a fresher breeze is blowing,  
Where's there's laughter in every streamlet flowing,  
Where there's more of reaping and less of sowing,  
That's where the West begins.

Out where the world is in the making,  
Where fewer hearts in despair are aching,  
That's where the West begins.

Where there's more of singing and less of sighing,  
Where there's more of giving and less of buying,  
And a man makes friends without half trying,  
That's where the West begins.

In all his years of hardships, there had been burned into the soul of Cody, real, true and progressive Americanism, and his life was at his country's call. When in '64 the rebellion was shaking the citadel of free government, he was in the midst of the carnage as a fighting scout for the Union Army, even before he



was of age. Every general loved Bill Cody, and the big army chiefs had this untamed Westerner made Chief of Scouts of the American Army, and how well he filled his post every history recalls to his honor and credit. When peace was restored he returned to the great West and became the great father of the Indians and was even adopted as chief by the Ogallalas. After the Custer massacre in 1876, he followed Gen. Terry through Montana along the Little Missouri river and in a fierce fight with the hostile Sioux, at the battle of War Bonnet, he was challenged as Chief Scout to come out from the lines and fight single-handed the murderous Chief-Yellow Hand, who carried a tomahawk, while Cody defended himself with his hunting knife. This was a battle royal and the Indian was speedily dispatched to the happy hunting grounds. What nerve, what superb courage, what a victory! He was thanked by the Congress of the United States for conspicuous bravery. What we need today is the *Cody spirit*, and the spirit of the cowmen who blazed the way for this generation, who subdued the wild beasts, fought the Indians, bridged the rivers, tunnelled the mountains, built the railways and made an empire out of a wilderness which is now inhabited by millions of prosperous, happy and contented Americans.

“Our fathers crossed the prairies, as of old their fathers crossed  
the sea,

To make the West, as they the East, the homestead of the Free.”

God bless the old pioneers and make us worthy to be their successors as fighting champions of liberty.

And God forgive the misdirected and misguided Americans who in their mad scramble for wealth, are neglecting, opposing and maligning the efforts now being made to defend this matchless heritage bequeathed to us. We owe unswerving allegiance to the army and navy of the United States, and we should prepare for the future a complete and adequate defense. We should compel military training, as the surest preventative of war. You would never have had a West if it had not been for the heroes of the plains. It was the Cody spirit—that forced fear into savages, and subdued ignorant anarchy. We shall yet be called to fight “*educated anarchy*.” Civilization in all Europe has proved a myth and only a despised scrap of paper. We hope to escape such a murderous cataclasm,—but the best way to prevent it is to get well ready for the worst. Cody was the man on ahead of the army—the “look-out.” We should demand from our administration “What of the Night?” and may it never be written across the ruins of free government—“Mene, Mene Tekel Upharsin,” weighed in the balance and found wanting.

In my limited time it is impossible to recall the many suc-



cesses of Col. Cody on the American stage through his varied and strenuous career as guide, scout, Indian fighter, as the originator of the Great Wild West Show, as a successful stockman and irrigation farmer, as a good citizen, loving husband and father and a truly American home builder. My mission is to bring home to this great assembly the lesson of his courage, his struggles with poverty, his prodigal liberality when wealth was showered around him; his iron-willed Americanism. No man can point to this bier and accuse him of selfishness, unkindness or of being money-mad. He was too big for these "impediments;" he lived in God's sunlight and reflected upon all a sunny disposition. No one ever heard Col. William F. Cody speak ill of a living soul, and his purse was always open to the poor and needy. He was rich in good deeds and is today mourned by countless thousands. His indomitable will held fast to this earthly habitation even to the last.

The last call of the old Scout was for Johnny Baker, and his old pard and loyal friend rushed away from New York, only to find upon his arrival in Denver, the dear old comrade had crossed the Great Divide, and he mingled his tears with the family whom he loved, for he could not be comforted.

His last telegram was to his personal friend King George of England, that the war might end and peace be restored throughout the whole world.

His last wish was that he should be buried from the Elks' Home.

To his latest breath, he counted time by heart throbs, thought of others to the very end, and fell asleep as a tired child of Mother Nature.

To our distinguished mayor, Hon. Robert W. Speer, we pay homage for arranging by deed from the city of Denver, that the remains of this great Western-American shall forever rest in the rocky fastness of Mt. Lookout, overlooking the Queen City of the West and overlooking the vast plains he helped to subdue and make habitable.

It is fitting that his tomb should be hewn out of the eternal granite of the Rockies, and it is to be hoped that a magnificent equestrian statue shall be erected by the people of the great West, while the U. S. government should erect the highest steel flagstaff on the continent and keep Old Glory floating thereon for all time, as a magnet to draw millions of pilgrims, where they could pay their devours at the last resting place of the first—the last—the chiefest of American pioneers.

It was of these heroes Will Carleton sang:

“When the springtime touch is lightest,  
When the summer-eyes are brightest,  
Or the autumn sings most dear;

When the winters hair is whitest,  
Sleep, old pioneer.  
Safe beneath the sheltering soil,  
Late enough you crept;  
You were weary of the toil  
Long before you slept.  
Well you paid for every blessing,  
Bought with grief each day of cheer;  
Nature's arms around you pressing,  
Nature's lips your brow caressing,  
Sleep, old pioneer.

When the hill of toil was steepest:  
When the forest-frown was deepest,  
Poor, but young, you hastened here;  
Came when solid hope was cheapest:  
Came a pioneer.  
Made the western jungles view  
Civilization's charms;  
Snatched a home for yours and you  
From the lean tree arms.  
Toil had never cause to doubt you.  
Progress' path you helped to clear;  
But today forgets about you,  
And the world rides on without you—  
Sleep, old pioneer.

Careless crowds go daily past you,  
Where their future fate has cast you,  
Leaving not a sigh or tear;  
And your wonder-works outlast you—  
Brave old pioneer.  
Little care the selfish throng,  
Where your heart is hid,  
Though they thrive upon the strong,  
Resolute work it did.  
But our memory eyes have found you,  
And we behold you grandly dear;  
With no work-day woes to wound you,  
With the peace of God around you—  
Sleep, old pioneer!"

Sleep on old Scout! Under the aegis of the old flag our hallowed Stars and Stripes, may he rest forever and a day.

Over three score years and ten and one, his record is made up, and we his friends lovingly lay him away. We shall garland his mountain tomb with sweet anemones, the wild columbines and the mountain daisies. His grave shall catch the first kiss



of the rising sun, while the moon and ten thousand stars keep watch when the shadows have dropped down from the eternal snow-capped peaks beyond. The mountain pines shall sing their requiems about his tomb, and in the hush and peacefulness of this abode, the spirit of William Frederick Cody shall live and dwell with us like a sweet benediction, forever and forever.

JOHN W. SPRINGER,

January 14th, 1917.

This morning I read the following soul picture drawn by Harriet Bradley, blind poetess, State Home for Adult Blind, of Colorado. With God's sunlight shut out from her sightless eyes, yet from her heart of hearts gushes the exquisite lines that follow:

*IN MEMORIAM*

Oh, Princely Lookout Mountain,  
Thy highly honored crest  
Shall hold in trust the sleeping dust  
Of him we loved the best,  
In Colorado's Mansion,  
'Mid sound of Sabbath bell,  
He lies in state while comrades wait,  
To look their long "Farewell."  
No need that bard or poet  
Should iterate his fame,  
Each girl and boy is thrilled with joy  
At mention of his name.  
Three-score-and-ten completed,  
And one to crown the end,  
With conscious breath he spoke of Death  
And met him as a friend.  
Two Continents will miss him,  
But one will prize him still,  
Tho'whelmed with grief to lose our Chief,  
We're proud of Buffalo Bill.  
In truth, we have not lost him,  
His record yet remains.  
His ashes sleep, but we shall keep  
Our Hero of the Plains.  
Oh, Princely Lookout Mountain,  
Strong monument of grace,  
By living voice Pahaska's choice.  
To be his resting place,  
Till Resurrection Glory  
Shall gild thy snowy crest,  
Hold thou in trust the sleeping dust  
Of him we loved the best.

